

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for suggesting programs, comprising;
 - a menu, wherein certain criteria are provided to assist a search of programs for suggestion;
 - a control, wherein desired search criteria can be selected;
 - a database of descriptions of a plurality of programs; and
 - a processor, wherein the processor performs the search of programs for selection by searching the database of program descriptions with the selected search criteria, the processor generating a list of suggested programs for viewing.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria is a mood criteria, wherein the mood criteria allows the selection of a subjective mood.
3. The system of claim 2, wherein the subjective mood is one or more of serious, thoughtful, light, tired, sad, happy, or blue, wherein when a first mood is selected, the processor presents selection of a mood opposite the first mood, and wherein selected moods are cross-referenced to key words from a thesaurus, the key words used to search the database.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria is a type, wherein the type criteria allows the selection of a type of program.
5. The system of claim 4, wherein the type is one or more of action, horror, foreign, adult, comedy, sitcom, black and white, thriller, sci-fi, drama, documentary, biography, western, murder, or mystery.
6. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria includes a categories/genre criteria, wherein the category/genre criteria allows for the selection of a program category.
7. The system of claim 6, wherein the program category is one or more of educational, childrens, sports, news, movie, cartoon, documentary, or specials.

1 8. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria is actor, wherein the actor
2 criteria allows the selection of an actor.

3 9. The system of claim 8, wherein the actor may be selected by entering one or more
4 of an actor's name, and a portion of an actor's name, wherein when the portion of the
5 actor's name is entered, the processor searches for a closest match to the portion of the
6 actor's name.

7 10. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria is a time criteria, wherein the
8 time criteria allows the selection of a preferred time.

9 11. The system of claim 10, wherein the preferred time is one or more of the
10 preferred time of day, the preferred duration, or the preferred day of the week.

11 12. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria is a year criteria, wherein the
12 year criteria allows the selection of the year of the program.

13 13. The system of claim 12, wherein the year of the program is the current year, five
14 to ten years old, ten to twenty years old, twenty to forty years old, or older than forty
15 years.

16 14. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria includes a standard rating
17 criteria, wherein the standard rating criteria allows the selection of the program's rating.

18 15. The system of claim 14, wherein the standard rating is G, PG, PG13, R, or NC17.

19 16. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria is a negative search criteria,
20 wherein the negative search criteria allows the entry of words descriptive of a program
21 of no interest, and wherein if the descriptive words are found in a program, the program
22 is excluded from the list of suggested programs.

23 17. The system of claim 1, wherein the control includes buttons.

24 18. The system of claim 1, wherein the control allows cursor movement on the menu.

25 19. The system of claim 1, wherein the control allows the entering of words.

26 20. The system of claim 1, wherein the control is a remote control.

27 21. The system of claim 1, wherein the programs are movies.

28 22. The system of claim 1, wherein the program descriptions are programs abstracts.

23. The system of claim 1, wherein the program descriptors include video clips of the program.

24. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria are key words that are used to search the database.

25. The system of claim 1, wherein a response is entered for the search criteria and wherein the response is mapped to key words that are selected from a thesaurus.

26. The system of claim 1, further comprising a submenu corresponding to one of the search criteria, wherein the submenu contains key words, which may be selected, further refining the search.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the search criteria that the submenu corresponds to is mood, and the submenu contains a list of subjective moods.

28. The system of claim 26, wherein the search criteria that the submenu corresponds to is type, and the submenu contains a number of descriptive adjectives of the types of programs.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein the search criteria that the submenu corresponds to is category/genre, and the submenu contains a plurality of program categories.

30. The system of claim 26, wherein the search criteria that the submenu corresponds to is actor, and the submenu allows the selection of an actor.

31. The system of claim 26, wherein the search criteria that the submenu corresponds to is time, and the submenu allows the selection of the preferred duration of program.

32. The system of claim 26, wherein the search criteria that the submenu corresponds to is standard rating, and the submenu contains a plurality of program ratings.

33. The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of submenus corresponding to the search criteria, wherein the submenus contain key words, which may be selected, further refining the search.

34. The system of claim 1, further comprising a selection menu, wherein the selection menu lists the suggested programs found by the search.

1 35. The system of claim 34, wherein the list includes the program descriptions of the
2 suggested programs.

3 36. The system of claim 35, wherein the control may be used to select a suggested
4 program.

5 37. The system of claim 1, wherein the search criteria is a personal profile of a
6 viewer.

7 38. The system of claim 37, wherein the personal profile includes demographic data.

8 39. The system of claim 37, wherein the personal profile is generated with answers
9 to a series of questions presented to the viewer.

10 40. The system of claim 39, wherein the series of questions are presented to the
11 viewer by a plurality of menus.

12 41. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the viewer's
13 name.

14 42. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the viewer's
15 age.

16 43. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the viewer's
17 sex.

18 44. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the viewer's
19 place of birth.

20 45. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the viewer's
21 place of higher education.

22 46. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the viewer's
23 employment type.

24 47. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the viewer's
25 level of education.

26 48. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the viewer's
27 amount of television viewing.

1 49. The system of claim 39, wherein one of the series of questions asks the number
2 of programs watched in particular categories by the viewer.

3 50. The system of claim 37, wherein the personal profile is stored in a memory.

4 51. The system of claim 1, wherein the programs are arranged by particular program
5 categories.

6 52. The system of claim 51, wherein the particular categories include sports.

7 53. The system of claim 51, wherein the particular category includes movies.

8 54. The system of claim 51, wherein the particular category includes documentaries.

9 55. The system of claim 51, wherein the particular category includes sitcoms.

10 56. The system of claim 1, wherein the programs are electronic books.

11 57. The system of claim 1, further comprising a viewer that displays the menu, search
12 results, and program description.

13 58. The system of claim 57, wherein the viewer is located at a video rental store, and
14 the programs are videos for rental and sale.

15 59. The system of claim 57, wherein the viewer is located at a library.

16 60. The system of claim 57, wherein the viewer is located at a bookstore.

17 61. The system of claim 57, wherein the viewer is a television display.

18 62. The system of claim 57, wherein the viewer is a display of a personal computer.

19 63. The system of claim 1, wherein the processor targets advertisements to an
20 individual subscriber, based on the subscriber's personal profile and a current program
21 selection.

22 64. The system of claim 63, wherein the advertisement is one of a commercial, a
23 promotional and an infomercial.

24 65. The system of claim 63, wherein the advertisements include an interactive
25 selection feature, the interactive selection feature allowing the subscriber to purchase an
26 item advertised.

27 66. The system of claim 63, wherein the advertisements are displayed on a portion
28 of a menu showing the search criteria.

- 1 67. An apparatus for suggesting programs, comprising:
2 a memory, wherein program abstracts are stored;
3 a control coupled to the memory, wherein viewer preferences can be
4 entered; and
5 a processor coupled to the memory and the control, wherein the processor
6 performs a search of the program abstracts based on the entered preferences and
7 suggests a program based on the search.
- 8 68. The apparatus of claim 67, wherein graphics are stored in the memory, the
9 apparatus further comprising:
10 a graphics decompressor that decompresses the graphics stored in
11 memory;
12 a text generator coupled to the graphics decompressor that generates text
13 for a menu; and
14 a video combiner coupled to the text generator, wherein the processor,
15 graphics decompressor, text generator, and video combiner generate at least one
16 menu.
- 17 69. The apparatus of claim 67, wherein the processor directs the displaying of menus
18 and wherein the menus can be navigated with the control.
- 19 70. The apparatus of claim 68, wherein the menus facilitate the entry of preferences.
- 20 71. The apparatus of claim 68, wherein the menus contain search criteria that are
21 selected to reflect viewer preferences.
- 22 72. The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the processor, graphics decompressor, text
23 generator, and video combiner generate a series of submenus that allow the viewer to
24 choose entries indicative of viewer preferences.
- 25 73. A system for suggesting videos to rent, comprising:
26 a plurality of menus that present a series of questions, wherein answers
27 to the questions are used to build a personal profile;
28 a control, whereby the answers to the questions may be entered;

1 a processor coupled to the control, wherein the processor interprets the
2 answers to build the personal profile and uses the personal profile to suggest
3 programs; and

4 a memory coupled to the processor, wherein the personal profile and
5 information about a plurality of programs are stored in the memory.

6 74. The system of claim 73, further comprising at least one mood question menu that
7 presents questions to determine a viewer's mood.

8 75. The system of claim 73, wherein the processor compares the personal profile, the
9 viewer's mood, and the information about the programs to suggest a program.

10 76. The system of claim 75, wherein the personal profile, the viewer's mood, and the
11 information about the programs are assigned different weights that affect the program
12 suggestion.

13 77. The system of claim 73, wherein historical data is maintained in the memory and
14 analyzed by the processor in order to learn a personal profile.

15 78. The system of claim 73, wherein the historical data includes viewer programs
16 watched data.

17 79. A system that suggests programs for viewing by a viewer, comprising:
18 a database that stores program content information, the program content
19 information including a program abstract;

20 an interface coupled to the database that receives information related to viewing
21 preferences of the viewer;

22 a memory that stores the information related to the viewing preferences; and

23 a processor coupled to the database that searches the database to suggest a
24 program for viewing by the viewer, wherein the information related to viewing
25 preferences includes historical data, the historical data including viewer habits related to
26 one or more of programs watched, channels watched, and time periods of television
27 viewing, wherein the historical data changes in response to changes in the viewer habits.

1 80. The system of claim 79, wherein the information related to viewing preferences
2 further includes information entered by the viewer in response to queries displayed by
3 the system.

4 81. The system of claim 79, wherein the information related to viewing preferences
5 includes viewer demographic information.

6 82. The system of claim 79, wherein the processors uses a matching algorithm to find
7 a best programming match for the viewer based on matching the information related to
8 viewing preferences to the database of program content information.

9 83. The system of claim 79, wherein the processor conducts a Boolean search using
10 multiple entries of information related to viewing preferences.

11 84. The system of claim 79, wherein the interface, the database, the memory and the
12 processor are included in a terminal in a telecommunications network.

13 85. The system of claim 84, wherein the terminal is a set top terminal in a television
14 program delivery system.

15 86. The system of claim 79, wherein the database, the memory and the processor are
16 included in an operations center of a television program delivery system.

17 87. An interactive kiosk, using a search algorithm, for suggesting programs for
18 viewing by a subscriber, comprising:

19 a database of program available for selection by the subscriber;

20 an interface that receives inputs from the subscriber and displays results to the
21 subscriber;

22 a memory coupled to the interface that receives information related to program
23 preferences of the subscriber, wherein the program preferences include the inputs from
24 the subscriber;

25 a processor coupled to the database and the memory, the processor searching the
26 database, based on the program preferences and the search algorithm, to generate a list
27 of suggested programs, the list displayed on the interface.

1 88. The kiosk of claim 87, wherein the information related to program preferences
2 includes viewer habits related to one or more of programs watched and subscriber
3 demographic data.

4 89. The kiosk of claim 87, wherein the inputs includes subscriber responses to
5 queries displayed at the interface.

6 90. A method for suggesting programs for viewing, comprising:
7 generating a database of program information related to available programs, the
8 program information including program abstracts;
9 collecting viewing information related to individual subscriber viewing habits;
10 processing the collected viewing information to generate search criteria;
11 searching the database using the search criteria to generate program suggestions;
12 and
13 displaying a list of suggested programs.

14 91. The method of claim 90, wherein the viewing information includes historical data
15 related to one or more of programs watched, channels watched, and time periods of
16 television viewing, wherein the historical data changes in response to changes in the
17 subscriber viewing habits.

18 92. The method of claim 90, wherein the information related to viewing habits
19 further includes information entered by the subscriber in response to subscriber data
20 queries.

21 93. The method of claim 90, wherein the step of collecting viewing information
22 further comprising collecting subscriber demographic data.
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